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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/834,332	04/13/2001	Theodore P. Adams	43163.325	2566

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EXAMINER

LACYK, JOHN P

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3736

DATE MAILED: 09/22/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 09/834,332	Applicant(s) ADAMS ET AL.	
	Examiner John P Lacyk	Art Unit 3736	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 13 April 2001.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1 and 23-46 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1 and 23-46 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Art Unit: 3736

1. Claim 32 is objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(c), as being of improper dependent form for failing to further limit the subject matter of a previous claim. Applicant is required to cancel the claim(s), or amend the claim(s) to place the claim(s) in proper dependent form, or rewrite the claim(s) in independent form. Claim 32 is directed to a method of claim 31, however claim 31 is directed to a hearing assistance system not a method.

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3. Claim 36 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In claim 36, the inductive element lacks positive antecedent basis.

4. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

Claims 26-40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. Claim 26 claims a positive connection to the body, while proper "adapted to" language has been used with respect to the middle ear, there is a positive connection to the inner ear, similar "adapted to" language should be

Art Unit: 3736

used. In claim 33, there is no "adapted to" language used thus claiming a positive connection to the middle ear.

5. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. Claims 1, 23, 26-28, 31-35, 37-45 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Steeger '520.

Steeger discloses a hearing aid system having a remote control programmer 1 (Figures 1 and 2) for communicating with the electronics unit 40 (Figure 5) of an implantable hearing aid. The hearing aid detects vibratory signals generated by the programmer through screw 50 via the patient's bone structure (column 6, line 48-53). The electronics unit transmits alternating voltages via wire 47 to a piezoelectric vibrator 45 which vibrates the patient's stapes 18. The piezoelectric vibrator is mounted to the patient's middle ear bone structure by a mounting screw shown in Figure 5. To have

considered the vibrator to have been constructed of a piezoelectric "film" given its thin longitudinal construction, as shown in Figure 5, and the well known use of piezoelectric films for this purpose would have been obvious if not inherent to one of ordinary skill in the art. The transmission mode of the programmer to the implantable hearing aid is considered to be acoustic (column 4, lines 15-36) and the input keys 3 of the control panel 2 of the programmer is considered to be a means for adjusting the parameters including volume on/off, etc. With respect to claims 27 and 32 they are merely directed to the intended use of the device as to where within the ear the device is connected to and as such provides no further structural limitations to the system claim.

8. Claims 24-25, 29-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Steeger in view of Schaefer '366.

Schaefer discloses a middle ear implant which makes use of piezoelectric film transducers 22, 24 (Figure 1) constructed of polyvinylidene fluoride (PVDF) (column 6, lines 62-66). A modification of Steeger such that the vibrator is made from the material as taught by Schaefer would have been obvious to one skilled in the art since this would merely be a modification of one well known and conventionally employed piezoelectric material for another.

9. The information disclosure statement filed 1/08/2002 fails to comply with the provisions of 37 CFR 1.97, 1.98 and MPEP § 609 because the listing fails to include the

Art Unit: 3736

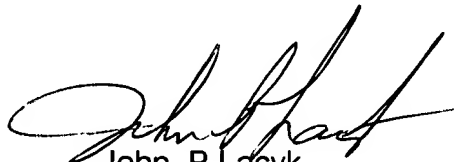
dates, inventor name(s) class and subclass for the US Patents and the Foreign Patent Documents. It has been placed in the application file, but the information referred to therein has not been considered as to the merits. Applicant is advised that the date of any re-submission of any item of information contained in this information disclosure statement or the submission of any missing element(s) will be the date of submission for purposes of determining compliance with the requirements based on the time of filing the statement, including all certification requirements for statements under 37 CFR 1.97(e). See MPEP § 609 ¶ C(1).

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to John P Lacyk whose telephone number is 703-308-2995.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Max Hindenburg can be reached on 308-3130. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Art Unit: 3736

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



John P Lacyk
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3736

J.P. Lacyk